CLAIM AMENDMENTS

Claims 1 to 2 (canceled)

3. (currently amended) An encoder for producing an encoded packetised stream, including comprising:

means for determining a minimum data rate to which the packetised stream could be repacketised for successful decoding by a decoder having a given first-in-first-out (FIFO) buffer size; and

means for introducing into the stream control data representing the minimum data rate ~~to which the stream could be repacketised for successful decoding by a decoder of known characteristics~~.

4. (currently amended) An encoder as claimed in claim ~~1, 2 or~~ 3, wherein the encoded stream is losslessly compressed digital audio data.

Claims 5 to 15 (canceled)

16. (currently amended) A mastering system comprising ~~an~~ the encoder ~~for producing an encoded packetised stream, the encoder including means for determining the minimum data rate to which the stream could be repacketised for successful decoding by each of one or more decoders of known characteristics and for introducing into the stream control data representing this minimum data rate~~ as claimed in claim 3.

17. (original) A system comprising a mastering system as claimed in claim 16, and means for repacketising the data to form a stream having a peak data rate calculated in dependence upon the control data.

18. (original) A system as claimed in claim 17, wherein the stream having a peak data rate corresponding to the control data comprises a fixed rate stream.

19. (original) A system for providing encoded data to a DVD comprising a mastering system as claimed in claim 16, and means for writing the control data onto the disc with the encoded data.

20. (currently amended) A system for providing encoded data to a DVD comprising a mastering system and an authoring system, the authoring system including an encoder ~~and means for determining the minimum data rate to which the encoded stream could be repacketised for successful decoding by each of one or more decoders of known characteristics, the authoring system writing control data to the disc representing this minimum data rate~~ as claimed in claim 3.

21. (original) A system as claimed in any one of claims 17 to 20, wherein the encoder comprises an MLP lossless encoder for audio data.

Claims 22 to 24 (canceled)

25. (currently amended) A data processing method comprising:

producing ~~an~~ a packetised encoded variable rate stream;

determining a minimum data rate to which the variable rate stream could be repacketised for successful decoding by a decoder having a given first-in-first-out (FIFO) buffer size; and

introducing control data into the encoded variable rate stream, the control data representing ~~a~~ the minimum data ~~rate at which the encoded variable rate stream may be packetised for successful decoding by at least one decoder of know characteristics~~.

Claim 26 to 28 (canceled)

29. (currently amended) The data processing method of claim ~~22 or~~ 25, wherein the encoded variable rate stream comprises losslessly compressed digital audio data.

Claim 30 (canceled)

31. (currently amended) The data processing method of claim ~~22, 23 or~~ 25, further comprising processing the control data to determine an adequate bandwidth for transmission of the encoded variable rate stream, and transmitting the encoded variable rate stream over an interface having at least the adequate bandwidth.

32. (previously added) The data processing method of claim 31 wherein the interface operates at a fixed data rate.

33. (previously added) The data processing method of claim 31, wherein the interface is for communication between a DVD player and external equipment.

Claims 34 to 44 (canceled)

45. (currently amended) A device for decoding variable rate data organised as a stream of packets, each ~~packing~~ packet including a corresponding decoder time stamp, the device comprising:

a feed buffer that receives the stream of packets to mitigate any interruption in the stream of packets;

a FIFO buffer having an input coupled to the feed buffer for receiving the stored data, and having an output; and

a decoder having an input coupled to the output of the FIFO buffer.

46. (previously added) The device of claim 45, wherein the feed buffer stores the stream until the corresponding decoder time stamp for each packet is identified.

47. (previously added) The device of claim 45, wherein the variable rate data comprises losslessly compressed digital audio data.

48. (previously added) The device of claim 45, wherein the variable rate data comprises digital data that has been encoded by an MLP encoder.

49. (previously added) The device of claim 45, wherein the decoder is an MLP decoder.

50. (currently amended) A decoder that decodes the encoded variable rate steam that includes said control data as provided by claim ~~22 of~~ 25.